

on the Sand Branch Longleaf Pine Forest site. This small geographic area supports the highest concentration of exemplary bogs in Montgomery County.

Description of Natural Communities and Rare Plant Populations:

The Sand Branch Natural Area includes three natural communities and a pine plantation. The Uwharrie Boggy Streamhead occurs on U.S.F.S. - Uwharrie National Forest and the other described communities occur on private property. The Uwharrie Boggy Streamhead is a low gradient drainage along the upper reaches of Sand Branch. The canopy consists primarily of Acer rubrum (Red maple), Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweet gum), Liriodendron tulipifera (Tuliptree), and Nyssa sylvatica (Black gum). The canopy also includes a few other trees such as Pinus taeda (Loblolly pine), Pinus palustris (Long-leaf pine), Quercus alba (White oak), and Quercus stellata (Post oak). The understory is dominated with mature Cyrilla racemiflora (Titi). Magnolia virginiana and Smilax laurifolia, both coastal plain plants, occur in the understory. The dominant herbs are Carex spp. (Sedges) and Osmunda cinnamomea (Cinnamon fern). A dense stand of Pinus taeda (Loblolly pine) grows in the adjacent uplands.

A Hillside Seepage Bog occurs along a tributary of Sand Branch and at the base of a moderate slope. The canopy consists of Acer rubrum (Red maple), Liriodendron tulipifera (Tuliptree), Pinus taeda (Loblolly pine), and Pinus serotina (Pond pine). Pond pine is uncommon in the piedmont. It commonly occurs with longleaf pine in the coastal plain and sandhills. The understory and shrub layer includes numerous coastal plain plants such as Quercus marilandica (Blackjack oak), Cyrilla racemiflora (Titi), Myrica heterophylla (Bayberry), Magnolia virginiana, Ilex glabra (Inkberry), and Amelanchier obovalis (A serviceberry). Cyrilla racemiflora (Titi) is the dominant shrub in the Hillside Seepage Bog. Fothergilla major (Witch-alder), a rare shrub, occurs on the edge of the Hillside Seepage Bog. Witch-alder has a North Carolina Status of Candidate. Gaylussacia frondosa var. frondosa (Dangleberry) is the dominant shrub in the adjacent uplands. Due to fire suppression, the canopy and understory layer is dense and the herb layer is sparse. The dominant herbs are ferns and sedges such as Carex folliculata, Osmunda cinnamomea (Cinnamon fern), Osmunda regalis var. spectabilis (Royal fern), Woodwardia virginica (Virginia chainfern), and Athyrium asplenoides (Lady fern).

The stream buffer and adjacent slopes of Sand Branch supports a mature Dry Oak-Hickory Forest. The dominant trees in the canopy include Quercus alba (White oak) and Quercus montana (Chestnut oak). Nyssa biflora (Swamp black gum) is found growing in the streambed of Sand Branch. Other canopy trees include Quercus velutina (Black oak), Quercus falcata (Spanish oak), Quercus coccinea (Scarlet oak), Acer rubrum (Red maple), Magnolia acuminata (Cucumber-tree), Nyssa sylvatica (Black gum), and others. The understory layer supports common tree species such as Oxydendrum arboreum (Sourwood), Cornus florida (Flowering dogwood), Diospyros virginiana (Persimmon), Ilex opaca (American holly), and Sassafras albidum (Sassafras). A North Carolina Watch List species called Nestronia umbellula grows scattered along the mid and upper slopes that border Sand Branch. The herb layer is spare in the Dry Oak-Hickory Forests.

Description of Faunal Communities and Rare Animal Populations: